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The Marble Arch

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BOSTON

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THE MARBLE ARCH

A COMEDIETTA
IN ONE ACT

BY
Edward Rose & A. J. Garraway

ADAPTED FROM
THE "VERSUCHERIN"
BY VON MOSER

BOSTON
Walter H. Baker & Co.

THE MARBLE ARCH.

CHARACTERS.

JACK MEREWETHER, *newly married.*

CAPT. TRENTHAM, *in pursuit of a wife.*

MARION MEREWETHER, *Jack's wife.*

CONSTANCE CAMERON, *running away from an unknown lover.*

COSTUMES.

MARION, in morning wrapper, later in elegant parlor costume.

MEREWETHER, TRENTHAM and CONSTANCE, in walking costume.

PROPERTIES.

Letters; writing materials; a white-rose tree with two white roses, one to pull to pieces; small watering can; a pot of forget-me-nots.

822.
R.72lm

THE MARBLE ARCH.

SCENE.—*A prettily furnished boudoir with doors* R. *and* L. *and centre opening, with garden backing. Table,* R., *with pens, ink, and blotting-book, etc.; couch down* L.; *stand with pot of forget-me-nots,* R., *small watering-pot, etc.; a footstool, flower-stand,* C., *with a white rose tree, chairs* R. *and* L.

MAR. (*discovered watering forget-me-nots* L. *of* C. *opening*). You dear little forget-me-nots! How thirsty you are to be sure; but you look very well, although you are a twelvemonth old. I wonder whether Jack will remember it's my birthday and bring me another lovely pot of forget-me-nots to-day? If he does I won't forget you, because I've been so happy since you've been with me! There! (*Finishes and crosses to table,* R.) Why, Jack hasn't opened his letters this morning! (*Arranges letters on table.*) Oh, how happy I am! It is so delightful to be twenty-two when you're married. I never cared what I was when I was single. Let me see (*sits on couch*), I've been married two months and three weeks and I'm twenty-two already. How time flies when you're Mrs. Merewether; and how it crept when I was Miss Jenkins! Oh, I must write again to Constance. (*Crosses to table and sits.*) I always do when my joy is too much for me: so she generally gets about four letters a week. (*Writing*) "*Darling Constance, I am so happy*"——But that's how I began last time. Never mind. I must underline it all now to show how much more I mean it! There—there—and there! (*Writing*) "*Jack is the best husband in the world—the kindest—the most constant—the most*"——Oh, what a little goose I am!

CONSTANCE *appears in* L. *doorway.*

CON. Bo!

MAR. (*starting*). Oh! what's that?

CON. I thought "Bo" was the proper manner of addressing geese.

MAR. (*jumping up and meeting her,* C.). Oh, my darling Connie! I was just writing to you. (*Kisses her.*) Why, how did you come to London?

CON. My dear, I'm running away!

MAR. Good gracious! From what?

CON. A husband.

MAR. What, another?

CON. Don't speak as if I were a Mormon, dear. I've only had one weaker half as yet, and he is no more.

MAR. But who is the new husband?

CON. I don't know. He's being prepared for me. I was staying at cousin Sam's—dear old motherly Sam Bildershaw, in Warwickshire—when only this morning I caught Samuel plotting! (*Goes to* L. H. *corner.*)

MAR. Against you?

CON. A man was being brought down to marry me—*me,* a poor innocent widow! You know I'm a bit of a campaigner. I've traveled alone all over the Continent since poor George died. In half-an-hour I packed all my traps, said good-bye to the conspiring household, bolted——

MAR. And came to me. (MARION *sits* CONSTANCE *on chair by table,* R.)

CON. Yes! *En route* for Nice.

MAR. Oh, but you must stop here a long, long time! I have so much to tell you.

CON. How much?

MAR. All about my happiness!

CON. (*alarmed*). Oh! I thought your letters——

MAR. Letters? What are *letters?* Why see! I was just writing to you—(*Crosses to table*)—but I couldn't give you any idea of it; you see language is so inadequate on a subject like Jack!

CON. (*reading*). "Jack is the best husband in the world." Oh dear! dear! (*Gravely, still reading*)—"the kindest—the most constant—the most"—there we stop.

MAR. Well—what *could* I say?

CON. When he's been constant for two months and three weeks. True; such virtues are rare.

MAR. Constance, I believe you're joking. (*Crosses to* L. C.) But seriously—my Jack is the most affectionate—the dearest—the charmingest——

CON. My dear Marion, shun superlatives! Be as happy as you like; there is no tax on happiness, and it improves the complexion; but remember the one danger of the superlative—*you can't get any further.*

MAR. Why, what do you mean? (*Sits on stool by* CONSTANCE.)

CON. I am a great traveler. I've been up a great many mountains, and I've noticed their ways. You climb to the top—hopeful, cheerful, hungry and romantic. The world lies stretched out before you. The air is cool, the snow is white, you wish you could stay there forever—but you can't.

MAR. (*dolefully*). Can't you?

CON. Not by a long way. A few minutes—and then——

MAR. Then?

CON. You have to come down again. By yourself you would probably walk down a grassy slope, and suddenly find an abyss yawning in the rudest way at your feet. With a guide—an ex-

perienced guide, who has been down that hill before—you do it by easy stages; from that delightful, dangerous hilltop to the securer plain of every-day life.

MAR. (*kneels*). But, Constance, you don't know my Jack.

CON. My dear, I know quite enough of him. I don't want to insist upon his faults; but—he's a man. One temptation, and he's nowhere.

MAR. (*rising, annoyed*). My husband nowhere!

CON. Try him, my love.

MAR. Constance, you—you know you're talking nonsense. It is very easy to say "try him."

CON. And almost easier to do it. (*Rising.*) Shall I?

MAR. (*startled*). What do you mean?

CON. Oh, you'd rather I *didn't* put this perfect being to the test.

MAR. You are quite at liberty to waste your time in any way you like.

CON. Then you defy me? (*holding up a pen to her*).

MAR. Oh—I——

CON. Oh! you *don't* defy me? (*putting pen on table*).

MAR. (*hastily*). Yes, I do. But what are you going to write? (*Crosses* to CONSTANCE.)

CON. You shall see (*sits and writes*). Don't be afraid, I won't disguise the hook too cleverly—but he'll swallow it.

MAR. He won't.

CON. He's a man. Take the first of his many weak points—his vanity.

MAR. But Jack's *not* vain ((L. C.).

CON. (*rises and comes* C.). Very well. It's baited. (*Reads letter*) "Dear Sir,—A lady is anxious to make your acquaintance, and will be at the Marble Arch at twelve this morning." That's all.

MAR. Very concise. The effect of practice, I suppose. (*Crosses to* R. *corner*).

CON. (*down* R.). Now, don't be ill-natured. Oh! I forgot—how am I to know him? (*Sees rose tree*) Ah! He shall wear a badge. (*Writes*). "If you come, wear a large white rose." Now to address it. I must make quite sure that it shall find him. (*Writes*). "J. Merewether, Esq.," and I'll put "private" in the corner. See, here are some unopened letters—I'll put it among them—you don't mind?

MAR. Oh, no! it will be a very good joke—at your expense. (*Door slams off* R.; *crosses* L.) Oh! there's Jack; he always slams the hall door, he's in such a hurry to see me. (*Crosses to door,* L.).

CON. (*rises*). How touching! But he mustn't see *me* before our meeting at the Marble Arch. How am I to escape him?

MAR. Through the garden, if you really—really——

CON. Yes, I really—really! I can see you don't half like it, poor dear; but you need the lesson—you're in a dreadful state of honeymoon. Besides, you defied me!—you'll see *he* won't.

[*Exit,* C.

MAR. I hate that girl! I think being a widow has quite spoilt her.

JACK (*calling off*, L.). Come along, Trentham, this way. (*Entering quickly*, L.) Here you are, my darling.

MAR. My dear old pet! I am glad to see you back, why you've been away——

JACK. An hour and three-quarters exactly.

MAR. He's kept count, the darling!

JACK. He has (*kisses her*).—Trentham (*shouting*).

MAR. Oh—is Captain Trentham here?

JACK. Yes—you've heard me speak of old Fred, hundreds of times. That telegram I had two hours ago was from him, saying he would be at Paddington on his way through town, but I persuaded him to break his journey, so now he'll see you.

MAR. In my wrapper? Never (*Runs off*, R.).

JACK. Marion! (*reproachfully*).

MAR. Oh, did'um then, did'um? (*Runs back and kisses him.*) There! you must make that do. [*Exit*, R.

JACK. Dear little woman! How poor, solitary Fred will envy me. (*Shouting*) Trentham! Oh, here you are at last.

Enter TRENTHAM, L.

TREN. My dear boy, you must remember I'm a bachelor, and can't afford to disregard appearances. Am I all right? (*Looks in glass.*)

JACK. Yes, I think you'll do!

TREN. Well, where's this wife of yours? (*Sits*, L.).

JACK. Please don't speak of her in that casual way. One would think you were an old married man.

TREN. No, thanks; I've just lost a wife.

JACK. A widower?

TREN. No, no, I only lost her in the sense of not gaining her. Thereby hangs a tale, which I will unfold afterwards.

JACK (*going to table* R., *and opening first letter*). Quite given her up?

TREN. Yes, quite; only—I'm following her.

JACK. Really?

TREN. Yes, she left her smelling-bottle behind her at a friend's house, and I said I'd take it to her—on the Continent—out of politeness, you know.

JACK. (*opening* CONSTANCE'S *letter*). You were always eccentric, my friend, but now you've come back from India—Halloa!

TREN. Eh, what's that? Not a tailor?

JACK (*reading*). "A large white rose"—"The Marble Arch". (*Crosses to couch*, L., *and hands letter to* TRENTHAM.) Here, read this. I think that may be called rather strong.

TREN. (*after reading it, returns it, and rises*). And do you mean to say you've no idea who it's from?

JACK. I never have ideas—they don't pay. (*Tears letter in two*).

TREN. Here, what are you doing?

JACK. Preparing it for the waste paper basket. Marion says her papa makes ten shillings a year out of his old letters; so you see even this may have its value.

TREN. (*taking letter*). But—I would'nt do that.

JACK. Eh, what are you doing?

TREN. I—I collect autographs, that's all (*putting it in his pocket*). There's a good deal of character in that hand.

JACK. I'm afraid there isn't much in the writer.

TREN. I should like to see that woman (*examining letter*). I like the way she makes her W's. (JACK *goes to* R. *of table.*)

JACK. You don't suppose I'm going to let myself in for anything of that sort?

TREN. Oh, but you know, Jack, you should always look this kind of thing in the face.

JACK. Eh?

TREN. At least—of course you're a married man—you should get another fellow to look it in the face for you. Now I—I'm horribly shy—result of five years in a solitary up country station in India—it's a perfect affliction to me.

JACK. Ah, you should get rid of that.

TREN. Just so! No use giving way—must break myself of it—now here's a capital opportunity.

JACK. How do you mean?

TREN. Why—why—suppose I went to the Marble Arch instead of you?

JACK. You?

TREN. Yes, just to see there was nothing wrong, you know. It couldn't do any harm. If she were old or ugly I could furl my rose and escape. At all events, I can report what she's like.

JACK. You really ought to marry, Fred. You'd lose this roving spirit then. However, rove on if you like; only remember I'll have nothing to do with it—and take care you're back to lunch.

TREN. (*looking at watch*). By Jove, I shall only just be in time! It was thoughtful of her to make it so near. Off to the Marble Arch! (*looking in glass*) Am I all right? Eh? Thanks.

[*Exit*, L.

JACK. *Bonne chance.* (*Goes to door*, L.). Oh, men and women, what fools you are. Now, I shall just have time to get those forget-me-nots for Marion. It's her birthday. She was so delighted with those I gave her last year, that it will be a pleasant surprise for her. My little wife! I wonder what genius invented marriage. I should like to stand that fellow a drink. (*Down* L. C.).

Enter MARION R.

MAR. (*surprised*). Where's Captain Trentham?

JACK (*putting on his gloves*). Gone for half-an-hour. But he'll

be back for lunch.

MAR. And I've been making myself nice for him to look at!

JACK. You'll keep, dear. (*Gets hat.*)

MAR. (*aside, looking at table,* R.). He's read it. Here's the empty envelope. (*Turns and sees* JACK *with gloves on—starting.*) Jack! you are going out.

JACK. Yes, I've an appointment.

MAR. Oh, but don't keep it! (*Eagerly*) Oh, do stay with me! I want you.

JACK. My darling, I shall be back to lunch.

MAR. But that's an hour away, and you've been out an hour and three-quarters already, and that makes—oh, I don't know what it makes, but *please* stay!

JACK. My dear Marion——

MAR. (*dragging him to couch*). Now, come and sit down and give me that horrid hat! I have so much to talk about—and this dear old seat reminds me of some of the happiest days of my life.

JACK. (*uneasily, looking at watch*). Yes, it reminds me of them too—but don't you think we can remember them just as well after lunch? (*Gets up and gets hat*).

MAR. Then you *will* go in spite of my entreaties. Jack, won't you tell me what this appointment is? (*pleadingly*).

JACK. Oh, that's my secret. (MARION *rises.*)

MAR. There should be no secret between husband and wife, Jack.

JACK. This is a secret which I mean most particularly to keep from *my* wife, Marion.

MAR. Then you no longer love me! I knew it—oh, I knew it!

JACK. Hang it, Marion, this is absurd. Surely, if I choose to give myself the pleasure of a little mystery——

MAR. Oh! He calls it a pleasure! (*Sits on couch*).

JACK. He does. (*Aside*) Why, I don't believe that fellow took his badge! I'll run after him with it. The letter said a large white rose. (*Goes to rose tree.*) Oh, Marion, you won't mind my taking one of these roses, I suppose (*plucks*).

MAR. (*indignantly*). Take the tree and go!

JACK. Thanks, I'm not a light porter. (*Aside*) New and unpleasant discovery; there are two sides to everything. Even to matrimony and Marion! [*Exit,* L.

MAR. (*starting up*). He's gone! He's left me in tears for a stranger! Oh, mamma was right, all men are alike. I wonder if papa left her after two months and three weeks, and rushed off; no, I don't think he *could* have done that, his gout was always so bad. Oh, what *shall* I do? I must write to somebody, and I can never trust that faithless Constance again. A husband and friend, gone at once—and gone together! But they generally do that—I know! I'll write to mamma. (*Goes and sits at table*). I will leave this house at once, and for ever, and go home to her. But how shall I begin?—with the end? (*Writes*)

Dearest Mamma,—Jack is false!" There, now I'll tell my maid to pack up. I'll ring. (*Getting up sees* CONSTANCE, *who runs in,* L., *laughing.*)

CON. Marion!

MAR. Constance!

CON. My dear, I can't tell you what fun it's been.

MAR. I hardly see the joke.

CON. He's delightful. I congratulate you heartily. I had no idea your taste was so good. (*Sits on sofa.*)

MAR. He's a monster. (R. *corner.*)

CON. No—no—you do yourself an injustice. Now listen.

MAR. (*crossing to* C.). I don't want ever to hear his name again.

CON. But I want to talk—and when I want to talk I *do.*

MAR. Yes, I've noticed that.

CON. I'd hardly got there when I saw my gentleman approaching, with a large white rose in his buttonhole.

MAR. Ugh! (*tearing off a rose from tree*).

CON. He saw I was looking at him, and as he came up he eyed me all over——

MAR. (*going to her, sharply*). And you let him?

CON. I liked it. (MARION *crosses to* R. *corner.*) Then he bowed—he has such a particularly graceful bow——

MAR. (*coming down*). Why didn't you marry him yourself?

CON. My dear, if you had only given me the chance! Well, he said "I believe I am here in accordance with your wish"—and then——

MAR. Then!

CON. For the first time I realized that I didn't in the least know what to do. I got hot, and I got red, and I never felt so uncomfortable in my life.

MAR. I dare say *he* was comfortable enough.

CON. Oh, of course you know him. He has such perfect tact. In two minutes we were chatting like old friends.

MAR. Really! (*Crosses to* CONSTANCE.) Constance, when are you thinking of leaving us?

CON. Well, this is hospitable. (*Rises and goes to* MARION.) Marion, you don't mean to say you're jealous?

MAR. I'm going to leave London at once, and I suppose even *you* would not care to remain here alone with——I think I heard the hall door.

CON. Was it? He didn't slam it this time.

MAR. (*restraining her sobs*). He—he's ashamed of himself. He isn't quite so brazen as *some* people yet. I feel I'd better leave you together. In these cases two are company and three are none! (*Bursts into tears and exit,* R.)

CON. Marion, my dear! What will he think of my being here? He has no idea that I know her! Ah! I might punish this erring husband for his misdemeanor. (*Listens at door,* L.) Here he comes! [*steals off,* C.

Enter TRENTHAM, L.

TREN. I've seen her! the rose did it. Rather thoughtful of Jack to catch me up with it; but why didn't I ask her name? (CONSTANCE *enters softly,* C., *and stands as if she had just entered by door,* L.) Bah! I mustn't think of her. A woman who could stoop to write such a letter! But what a lovely creature—what a voice—what action—what——(*Turns and sees* CONSTANCE, *and starts.*) Damn it, here she is! You—you haven't followed me?

CON. To be quite candid, I have. You are——

TREN. Charmed, of course. At the same time it—doesn't it strike you that this is a little awkward?

CON. No—no. (*Aside*) He's so deliciously uncomfortable. What a sweet little room this is!

TREN. Very sweet. I—I think so myself. A nice door that (*pointing off,* L.). But won't you——

CON. Oh, don't make any apologies, pray!

TREN. (*aside*). She seems quite at home. I wish I was.

CON. (*sits,* L. C.; *dropping her handkerchief*). Won't you sit down and make yourself agreeable? TRENTHAM *sits at table,* R., *and, seeing handkerchief, picks it up and gives it to* CONSTANCE; *in receiving it she drops her glove; he gives it to her. Business.*) Thanks. Haven't you anything to say?

TREN. (*aside*). This is too strong! What on earth am I to do? Beat her at her own game? My only plan! Shall I adopt it? Carried *nem. con.*

CON. Did you exhaust your conversation at——

TREN. (*now quite at his ease, places chair close to her*). The Marble Arch? Dear old Marble Arch! I shall always love that place.

CON. (*rather surprised*). Oh!

TREN. Shan't *you?*

CON. I—it's always been a favorite spot of mine.

TREN. Architecturally or—(*tenderly*)—morally?

CON. Morally—(*Gets up, and sits on couch.*)—quite morally.

TREN. I'm glad of that. (*Sits on chair.*) What a sympathy there is between us, isn't there?

CON. Really! (*Moves to middle of couch.*)

TREN. But *isn't* there? (*following her and taking her hand*).

CON. To a certain extent; but you must remember you are a married man. (*Rises.*)

TREN. (*aside*). So I am!—*You* make me forget it.

CON. Mr. Merewether! I mean——

TREN. You mean Jack—call me Jack. Talking of marriage, are you at all in that line?

CON. I am a widow.

TREN. So am I! No, I don't mean that; I mean, oddly enough, I always adored widows, don't you?—(*rises*)no, I don't mean that, I mean—strange, isn't it?

CON. Yes, very curious.

TREN. (*aside*). She's getting frightened. Particularly widows

with tiny hands, nut-brown hair, dark-blue eyes—by the way, are your eyes blue or green?

CON. Sir!

TREN. (*aside*). That's done it!

CON. I never heard such assurance! (*Aside*) Oh, poor dear Marion! (*Aloud*) Have the goodness to sit over there.

TREN. There? (*Tries chair,* R. C., *then* L. C.)

CON. There! (*Business with* TRENTHAM *and chairs.*)

TREN. Thanks. (*Aside*) How she gives the word of command! I daren't disobey her. (*Sits up* R.).

CON. We shall get on better now. (TRENTHAM *rises, sits on couch; business.*) You mustn't be so restless. (*Turns her back to him.*)

TREN. What a lovely creature, and how she snubbed me! I could adore her even from this distance; but I haven't got rid of her. Ahem! She's a little deaf. Perhaps that will help to cut the Gordian knot; I'll try. (*Rises softly and steals to* C. *door.*) You've got me into a difficulty. You may get yourself out of it.

CON. You may go on talking now.

TREN. Thanks! I've done! [*Exit,* C.

CON. I say you may go on talking now. (*Aside*) Has the man turned sulky? I really don't know what to do with him. (*Aloud*) Have we discussed the weather yet? (*Aside*) Dear me, I am beginning to wish Marion would come and explain everything.

Enter JACK, L., *with pot of forget-me-nots.*

JACK. There! (*puts flowers on table*). Now for a line of tender inscription. (*Prepares to write; sees* MARION'S *letter.*) What's this?

CON. (*aside*). I can hear he is getting restless. Well, I won't help him.

JACK (*reading*). "Dearest Mamma—Jack is false." Goodness gracious! (*Rises.*)

CON (*aside*). Oh, I can't hold out. Ahem!

JACK (*aside*). Oh, Marion's there. Well, I won't make the first advance! Ahem! (*Bends over flowers*).

CON. (*aside*). I give it up! (*Crosses to* JACK.) Are you writing a message to me? (*He turns round quick.*) Oh! A strange gentleman! How did you get here?

JACK. How did *you* get here?

CON. Oh, I beg your pardon.

JACK. Don't mention it.

CON. You see, I am an intimate friend of Mrs. Mereweather's, so I happened to be here.

JACK. I see; yes.

CON. You know her, too, of course?

JACK. Slightly. I am—my name is Mereweather

CON. Oh—a brother-in-law, I suppose?

U. OF ILL. LIB.

JACK (*mystified*). Brother-in-law?

CON. Yes—I mean—a brother of my friend's husband.

JACK. I think there is some mistake. I have no brother, and this is my house.

CON. Your house! Oh, it *can't* be!

JACK. I can show you the lease, if that will be any satisfaction.

CON. But if you are Mr. Merewether, I ought to know you.

JACK. Does that follow? (*Puzzled*).

CON. No—no—but the gentleman who was here just now——

JACK. Eh? Oh, I expect you've seen Fred, an old friend of mine.

CON. What—and—and he pretended—oh, that I should have made such an utter fool of myself! Then he was laughing at me all the time. Oh! oh! (*fainting*).

JACK. The woman's going to faint. (*Catches her*). Here, I say, you mustn't do that, you know. Now be calm. I don't know what you've been doing, but I'm sure it isn't anything particular.

Enter MARION, R., *seeing them.* JACK *pushes* CONSTANCE, L.

MAR. Oh! Now I can believe my eyes!

CON. No—no—indeed you can't! It's quite a mistake.

JACK. Marion!

MAR. Don't touch me! (*Crosses to* C.).

CON. I'll explain——

MAR. Don't touch me!

JACK (*down* L.). My dear girl——

MAR. I'm *not* your dear girl, I'm only your wife—your neglected, betrayed wife.

CON. But listen——

JACK. Yes, listen—I'll——

MAR. I won't! Oh, you two wicked people. One of you is as bad as the other—and worse! You led him astray, and he followed you astray—out of my sight! Let me never see you again. Go, go both of you—to—to the Marble Arch. (*Rushes out,* R., *followed as far as door by* JACK).

JACK. Eh? you led me astray?

CON. Oh, I confess everything. It's been all my fault. I wrote that letter——

JACK (*crosses,* L.). What, the "Marble Arch"—"the large white rose"? Then my wife knows all about it?

CON. Of course! Do you think I should have dared?

JACK. And do you think *I* should? No; it was Fred who went instead of me.

CON. Oh, what must he think of me? (*Sits on couch.*)

Enter TRENTHAM, C.

TREN. Has she gone? (*Sees her*) No! (*About to escape.*)

JACK (*detaining him*). It's all right, old man; we've both been mystified.

TREN. Both? (*About to run off.*)

JACK. Yes; my wife was at the bottom of the joke herself.

TREN. (*amazed*). Your wife?

JACK. Now, I think I'll be off to Marion to make an explanation, and—(*sees flowers*)—happy thought! I'll take these as a peace offering. (*Takes flowers and crosses to door,* R.) Poor old Fred! [*Exit,* R.

TREN. (*aside*). His wife!

CON. I feel that I owe you a full explanation.

TREN. Pray don't trouble—I know everything.

CON. (*surprised*). Everything? How?

TREN. From your husband!

CON. My *wnat?*

TREN. Your husband.

CON. (*aside*). Now he takes me for the wrong man's wife!

TREN. It was a dangerous joke, though. Do you know I very nearly fell in love with you myself, Mrs. Merewether? No, I don't mean that.

CON. How very dreadful

TREN. Oh, it's just my luck. Why, only this morning a friend of mine in Warwickshire had found a charming widow for me to marry. Now, what do you think she did?

CON. I've no idea. I don't know what widows generally do in Warwickshire.

TREN. She bolted—to Nice. I had a telegram at nine o'clock this morning saying, "No go. Better luck next time." And you see it's been worse luck next time, Mrs. Merewether. No—I don't mean that.

CON. I'm very sorry. Might I ask her name?

TREN. Constance Cameron. (CONSTANCE *starts.*) Do you know the lady?

CON. Particularly well. They say she's a little like me.

TREN. Then she must be lovely—no, I don't mean that—yes I do. She left her smelling-bottle behind her, and I'm just going to run over to Nice with it, and leave it at her door.

CON. Indeed? Would it be troubling you too much to ask you to take her a letter from me?

TREN. (*eagerly*). The trouble would be rapture. (*Drawing back*). I don't mean that. (CONSTANCE *sits* R. *of table, and commences to write; aside,* L.) What an angel! But I've noticed other fellows' wives always are.

Enter JACK, R.

JACK (*crossing in front of table to* TRENTHAM). It's all right; my wife's satisfied. She's quite calm now.

TREN. Oh, yes, she's quite herself again.

JACK. Eh? How do you know? Have you seen her, then?

TREN. Have I seen her? Can I ever forget her?

JACK (*turns and sees* MARION, *who enters door,* R.). Then I needn't introduce you. Marion, I think you know this gentleman.

TREN. (*surprised*). I don't know this lady.

JACK. Why, you just said you could never forget her. Fred, this is my wife.

TREN. (*astounded*). What, another?

MAR. No, the first.

TREN. I say, Jack, this is getting past a joke. Is this *really* your wife?

MAR. I really am.

TREN. (*pointing to* CONSTANCE). But who's *she?*

MAR. A dear friend of mine, *en route* for Nice.

TREN. (*starting*). Nice!

MAR. (*going to* CONSTANCE). Constance, let me introduce my husband and his friend. Captain Trentham—Mrs. Constance Cameron. (*Goes with* JACK, C.).

CON. (*aside*). Oh, how hot I feel!

TREN. (*aside*). I should very much like to run away.

CON. Here is the letter; would you like to read it?

TREN. Thanks (*taking it; reading*), "Dear Constance,—You need not have fled so precipitately. Captain Trentham is not such a bad fellow, after all. I almost think that in time one might become quite attached to him." Oh, do you really mean it, and will you accept——

CON. My smelling-bottle? Yes, please.

TREN. No! let me keep it, and *you.* Thanks (*seizing her hand*).

JACK (*coming down*). Hulloa! What does all this mean?

CON. That great effects from trifling causes spring!

TREN. A joke the cause——

MAR. The great effect, the ring!

TREN. That prize to win, what soldier would not march
Even to Nice!

CON. Or to—the Marble Arch!

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